

Town of Wellfleet

Shellfish Department

Pandemic (COVID-19) Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan



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I. INTRODUCTION

Shellfishing is a source of food production – an essential service both federally and for the state – and the Wellfleet Shellfish Department’s oversight of the shellfishery is considered an essential service both for commercial enterprise and for recreational provisions. Wellfleet is first in the state for value of its shellfish landings (~\$7.7M in 2019) and approximately 15 percent of the population – and more importantly, 25 percent of working age people in Wellfleet – rely on shellfishing for their livelihoods. The success of this industry translates directly into the ability of the Town and its community to overcome the crisis at hand both economically and emotionally.

The Town of Wellfleet’s Shellfish Department:

- enforces town, state and federal policies and regulations governing shellfishing activities,
- propagates commercial and recreational shellfishing areas,
- protects Wellfleet Harbor’s environment and the general public’s safety, and
- conducts public outreach and education.

To achieve its above responsibilities, the department is operational seven days a week, it employs three full-time personnel, utilizes three trucks, a boat, a barge and an ATV. Much of its work is performed outdoors in all kinds of weather on intertidal bottom areas and on the water, supervising and interacting with commercial and recreational shellfishermen and grant leaseholders (shellfish farmers). Its personnel liaise with federal, state and county governments and work closely with the Harbormaster Dept. and other town departments and committees.

II. PURPOSE. SPECIFICALLY, THIS PLAN IS DESIGNED TO:

- Work closely with Town, State and Federal governments to ensure emergency preparedness plans are implemented to keep staff, commercial shellfishermen, shellfish farmers, employees and recreational harvesters safe
- Ensure that commercial shellfishermen and shellfish farmers can continue to safely harvest shellfish for sale and consumption, and recreational shellfishermen can safely harvest shellfish as food for their tables
- Continue enforcement of all local, state and federal regulations
- Work collaboratively across town departments, state agencies and other businesses to help shellfishermen continue to work and support their families
- Provide for continued propagation activities in Wellfleet Harbor in order to safeguard the future of the shellfisheries
- Promptly and accurately adapt oversight and management of the Town’s shellfishery to meet the changing impacts of the emergency and be available for emergencies that arise
- Communicate effectively and in a timely manner all changes and developments in emergency protocols to the entire community of commercial and recreational shellfishermen, shellfish farmers and shellfish industry employees

III. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Priority	Essential Functions
1	Oversee the commercial and recreational shellfisheries, as well as shellfish farm operations, in order to ensure that Town, State and Federal regulations are being respected and enforced, if necessary
2	Continue propagation efforts to safeguard the future of the shellfishery
3	Collaborate to find ways to keep shellfishermen working during the crisis
4	Function as first responders on the intertidal flats and on the water for the shellfishing community
5	Communication with all permit holders, lease holders and employees
6	Ensure continued function of Shellfish Department responsibilities, e.g. issuing of permits, renewals and transfers of leases, fishery oversight and financial duties (payroll, bills payable, etc.)

IV. ORDERS OF SUCCESSION

If the Shellfish Constable is unavailable or otherwise unable to perform the required duties, the activation and management of this plan and Shellfish Department duties would be as follows:

Successors
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable – 617-901-7193 – Mondays-Fridays – always on call
Johnny Mankevetch, Assistant Shellfish – 508-962-0691 – Tuesdays-Saturdays
Chris Manulla, Deputy Shellfish Constable – 508-962-8934 – Sundays-Thursdays

Delegations of Authority

All Shellfish Constables are already authorized to perform all Shellfish Department duties, so no further delegation of authority is necessary.

V. POTENTIAL HAZARD

Pandemic/Public Health Emergency COVID 19

VI. MITIGATION

1. Our office at the pier is closed to the public. Staff are taking turns in the office or practicing social distancing protocols of six feet between them when working at office for brief periods of time. Each staff person has a truck assigned to them and is only allowed to travel in that specified truck by themselves. On the boat, we keep six feet between us. Office equipment, surfaces, doorknobs, light switches, truck interiors and handles, etc. are wiped down and disinfected regularly. Constables are washing their hands multiple times during their shifts. Hand sanitizer is also available for use in the office and trucks.
2. WSD will collaborate closely with Health Agent (and Board of Health as necessary) to ensure adequate precautions are being taken to protect and opportunities identified to help the shellfishing industry.
3. Shellfishing permits will not be able to be issued in Town Hall.
As long as the United States Post Office (USPS) is still functioning:
 - The public can download the [recreational shellfishing application](https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/shellfish-department/pages/recreational-shellfishing) from our website and mail it to the Attention of the Shellfish Constable, Town of Wellfleet, 300 Main St. Wellfleet, MA 02667 with their proof of residency and supporting documents, a check and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The permit will be mailed back to them. Permits are issued for a specific calendar year, and no shellfishing without a valid license for the current year will be allowed under any circumstances.
<https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/shellfish-department/pages/recreational-shellfishing>
 - During an emergency, domiciled residents who wish to apply for a commercial shellfishing permit between Dec. 1-Jan. 31 each year, can download the application and mail it to the attention of the Shellfish Constable for approval. Mailing must include supporting documents, a copy of their Mass. Shellfish Transaction card, a check and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please address to the Attention of the Shellfish Constable, Town of Wellfleet, 300 Main St. Wellfleet, MA 02667. Once all criteria have been established to have been met, the permit can be issued via mail.
<https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/shellfish-department/pages/commercial-shellfishing>
4. All correspondence regarding grant transfers and grant payments will need to be done by mail (if USPS operational) and/or email. Please address to the Attention of the Shellfish Constable, Town of Wellfleet, 300 Main St. Wellfleet, MA 02667 and/or nancy.civetta@wellfleet-ma.gov.
5. Public hearings and Shellfish Dept. business in front of the Selectboard will need to be done virtually via an online platform. Participation in other town committees and boards, such as the Shellfish Advisory Board, will also be done virtually via an online platform.

6. In-person meetings will need to be conducted via phone and related paperwork exchanged electronically or via USPS (if operational). Please address to the Attention of the Shellfish Constable, Town of Wellfleet, 300 Main St. Wellfleet, MA 02667 and/or nancy.civetta@wellfleet-ma.gov.
7. In-person meetings, trainings, educational seminars and correspondence with federal, state, county and town officials will need to be conducted via online platforms and email and/or USPS, if operational.
8. Propagation activities may be impacted if seed becomes unavailable or if we are not able to put together enough people to execute planting and other operations. Otherwise, staff will follow CDC safety guidelines and federal and state social distancing guidelines while implementing propagation activities. We are avoiding extended propagation activities during heavy inclement weather.
9. State water quality sampling protocols will need to be modified to accommodate for social distancing but should still be able to take place.
10. All patrol responsibilities will be implemented, but protocols will be modified as follows:
 - a. Each constable will conduct patrol by themselves in their assigned truck.
 - b. The catches of both commercial and recreational harvesters will be checked for seed and limits, and commercial harvesters will be checked for correct tags as always.
 - c. The Shellfish Department will be practicing social distancing of six feet between people, which means that we will ask shellfishermen to move away as we inspect their catches.
 - d. Shellfish Dept. constables will stand up wind of shellfishermen.
 - e. Shellfish Dept. constables will monitor recreational shellfishery to ensure people are respecting social distancing protocols (six feet of distance between them).
 - f. We will continue to monitor shellfish farm activities and put protocols in place to help farmers with their needs, such as marine debris dumpsters at the pier during cleanup periods.
11. More frequent communications with shellfishing public to advise of changes in protocols and opportunities will be implemented. We communicate via:
 - a. Email – Town Shellfish Crier to shellfishing industry and Town Recreational Shellfish Crier to greater shellfishing community – More town staff than usual will be copied on these emails, so they understand efforts being made by WSD and others during crisis.
 - b. Text Messages – With link to Shellfish Crier and other important updates to shellfishing industry (commercial only, not recreational)
 - c. Website – Home page of WSD page will communicate important changes, opportunities and protocols during crisis.

- d. Facebook – WSD page will communicate important changes, opportunities and protocols during crisis.
- e. Signage – If open shellfishing area changes occur or closures are implemented for any reason, signage will be placed at all appropriate landings/areas. The ball at the pier will go up, as usual, when the entire harbor is closed for any reason.

12. In the event of an exposure of any staff member or staff member's immediate family to COVID-19, we will follow the CDC and Mass. DPH protocols.

VII. ESSENTIAL CONTINUITY EMPLOYEES

All Shellfish Department staff are considered essential employees. There is only one staff person on each weekend day; John Saturdays and Chris Sundays.

Essential Employees
Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta – 617-901-7193 – Mondays-Fridays – always on call
Assistant Shellfish Constable John Mankevetch – 508-962-0691 – Tuesdays-Saturdays
Deputy Shellfish Constable Chris Manulla – 508-962-8934 – Sundays-Thursdays